

Recycling Public Advisory Council

Meeting Summary for Wednesday, October 25, 2017

- Location:** The Environmental Education Center, DSWA Delaware Recycling Center, 1101 Lambsons Lane, New Castle, DE 19720
- Members present:** Stan Mills, Chairman (League of Local Governments) Paul Bickhart (Recycling Industry)
Dick Cecil (DE Association of Counties)
Marjorie Crofts (DNREC)
Julie Miro Wenger (Del. Food Industry Council) Mike Parkowski (DSWA)
Coralie Pryde (League of Women Voters)
Sewall McCabe (Soda Beverage Industry)
Adam Webster (Restaurant Industry)
Michael Fusca (Alcohol Beverage Industry) Steve Masterson (Waste Masters Solutions) Rustyn Stoops (Del. Chamber of Commerce) Vikram Krishnamurthy (Public)
- Members absent:** Wendy Turner (Public)
Marianne Cinaglia (Public)
- Non-members present:** Don Long (DNREC) John Neyman (Republic Services)
Jackie Howard (DNREC) Dave Jinks (Republic Services)
Julia Haas (DNREC) Chris Fiorell (Alcohol Bev)
Nancy Marker (DNREC)

Call to Order, Introductions

Meeting called to order by Chair at approximately 1:00pm

Public Comments

Correspondence: N/A

Members of Public: N/A

Approval of:

Meeting Minutes of 9/27/2017: approved with the following corrections – Adam Webster was present and the December meeting was moved to the 13th, not 12th. Suggested changes proposed by Marjorie Crofts.

Council Membership

Vacancies discussed – One remaining seat

Committee Reports

Outreach/Education Updates: Jackie Howard gave a brief presentation on the current status of the media campaign.

- Highlight: radio spots

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- Marjorie Crofts asked for more clarification on why “crushed cans” are being discouraged within the ad.
- Mike Parkowski explained that “flat” cans and bottles are difficult to properly sort
 - Rustyn Stoops asked what people should do with flat cans
 - Mike Parkowski stated that flat cans can be picked out in manual sorting and are mostly likely still going to be recycled, but it is better for them to be uncrushed or not flattened.
 - Marjorie Crofts, Coralie Pryde, and Mike Parkowski agreed that the wording was problematic
 - Jackie Howard assured the council that it “should be an easy fix”. Don Long stated that he would contact ab+c to correct the confusing language.
- Highlight: TV Spots: Played two 30 television ads
 - Stan Mills asked about how the campaign will function. It is funded for 3 years, but the information currently presented is not dated to last or air for the full length.
 - Jackie Howard stated that the campaign is scheduled to work in phases, and able to make alterations as it progresses. The “referee” focused ads are Phase 1 and there will be a Phase II, and/or a Phase III, building on the Phase I message.
 - Steve Masterson asked if haulers would be allowed to feature showcase the video ads through their own media.
 - Don Long said that he would look into it.
- Highlight: Billboards
 - Jackie Howard discussed a meeting she had with DNREC Public Affairs Office – DNREC logo to be added to advertisements.
 - Don Long presented photos from a public outreach event that took place at the University of the Delaware Lewes Campus on October 1st. Don reported that the City of Milford, through partial funding provided by DNREC, recently installed new dual trash and recycling receptacles in their parks and other public spaces.
 - Jackie Howard welcomed any emailed questions or comments on the grants or media campaign, from either RPAC or the public.
 - Stan Mills commended Don Long and Jackie Howard on their efforts and actions.

Old Business

- Jackie Howard gave updates on the Universal Recycling Grants
 - Reported that Cycle 7 is set to end 10/31/2017, barring the grants that applied for amendments to extend their deadlines. Jackie stated that Cycle 7 is “going well”, she has reached out to all of the recipients and received positive feedback. The only exception being Red Clay Consolidated School District, which has not responded yet and Jackie stated that she intends to follow up with them.
 - Jackie Howard also reported that Cycle 8 is grants are scheduled to end on January 31, 2018.
 - Stan Mills stated that the program is limited by lack of funding
 - Jackie Howard reported that she has been following up with closed out grants from Cycle 3 and the results have been very positive.
 - Stan Mills brought up that the positive closed out grants are “good press” to take to the Governor, and he asked Jackie Howard to take pictures at her next close-out visit.
 - Stan Mills spoke about wanting to set up a meeting between Governor Carney and

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RPAC (Stan) and to include Marjorie Crofts and Mike Parkowski. Stan stated that the Governor's office has been referring him to DNREC, he plans to reach out with a letter instead.

- Stan Mills brought up the dates for the 2018 meeting calendar. Stated that the dates were firm, while the times are more subject to change based on the Legislative schedule. He also confirmed that RPAC will continue to move meeting locations in a rotation, possibly altering meeting locations, as needed, to accommodate the Legislative schedule; any changes will be communicated.
- Don Long reported that RPAC had reached out to the Division of Revenue with the goal of including a Letter concerning Recycling Law Compliance with their annual business license renewal letter. However, Revenue was ahead of schedule and RPAC no longer has that option for this year. There are approximately 120,000 recipients for the letter, Don stated that he is looking into alternative means of distribution before the end of the calendar year.
- It was noted that overall commercial recycling rates are trending up.
 - Steven Masterson commented that the increase could simply be due to the economy, "same people doing more" instead of an increase in participation.
 - Mike Parkowski answered that while waste is also increasing recycling rates have been increasing over the past two years.
 - Don Long concurred with Mike Parkowski
 - Steven Masterson stated that he was still concerned with resistance in some areas of the commercial sector.
- Stan Mills asked Don Long if he had completed any waste assessments recently.
 - Don answered that he recently worked with the Town of Milton to increase their 28% recycling rate through coordinated efforts between Milton, DNREC, and a non-profit.

New Business

- Stan Mills introduced the topic contamination reduction at the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) by mentioning a meeting DNREC and DSWA held with haulers in 2016 in an effort to educate.
 - Mike Parkowski stated that the meeting addressed contamination issues and improvements. For their part, DSWA overhauled their "drop-off" program, eliminating unmanned drop off points. Contamination rates down from 34% to 8%. Mike expressed that Delaware is doing very well in their recycling participation and contamination rates when compared to the rest of the country.
 - Mike used the City of Wilmington as a positive example of improvement. They launched an aggressive initiative and were able to reduce their contamination rates from 35% to 10% within three weeks.
 - Stan Mills showcased pictures of "recycling gone bad" that displayed contamination and "bad recycling habits" around the state. Issues included; plastic bags, co-mingled trash/recycling, scrap metal, and the State Fair display.
 - Don Long stated that the next phase of the media campaign will address these issues.
- Mike Parkowski reported on "light weighting", a practice adopted by the packing industry six years ago that works to use less material in packaging. This includes using thinner and less sturdy plastics (water bottles), plastic film, and cardboard packaging. Mike explained that while this is a positive process in the effort of reduction, the MRF is running into problems because of it. Processing the lighter weight products requires the same amount of energy yet yields less sellable

- materials. This impacts their viability as the MRF relies on the sale of reclaimed materials for their operating budget.

Legislative Updates

N/A

Recycling Market Update

- Paul Bickhart reported that October had been a bad month for the cardboard and lower end paper markets, while metals and high grade paper markets have remained stable. Paul cited export issues regarding the decline, and stated that he is expecting those “issues” to increase
- Mike Parkowski commented that the markets are tough all around. There is a lot of apprehension surrounding the December deadline of China’s National Sword initiative. Most US MRF’s do not think they will be able to meet the elevated standards set by the new initiative. Mike stated that he believes this will shut down the mixed paper market entirely and cripple single stream recycling.
 - Marjorie Crofts asked if National Sword was a “done deal”
 - Mike Parkowski answered that industry representatives are still trying to work with the Chinese government, without much progress. Regardless of outcome, December will bring a severe dip in the recycling markets. He also stated that he believes that the DE MRF may be able to meet the National Sword standards with a small investment in equipment upgrades.
 - Stan Mills asked when in December the initiative is expected to be enacted.
 - Mike Parkowski answered that the beginning of the month is the current expectation.
 - Coralie Pryde asked what the new guidelines would be.
 - Mike Parkowski outlined the new stringent importation standards regarding mixed paper and plastics. He also mentioned that the DE MRF relies on these two products for its operating budget.
 - Mike Parkowski and Steven Masterson both commented that the National Sword initiative will change the meaning of single stream recycling in the US.
 - Julie Miro Wenger asked if there was a solution, or best case scenario.
 - Mike Parkowski answered that the best outcome would be for China to back off to more reasonable restrictions or extend the current agreements. The DE MRF will adjust, but some companies, nationwide, will close.

Additional Public Comments

- Stan Mills stated that Baltimore City is considering banning expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), and that Montgomery County, MD has already done so. Would DE entertain the consideration?
 - Mike Parkowski answered that currently Delaware has not raised the issue of banning Styrofoam, but there are national initiatives to begin programs, rather than create legislation, working towards eliminating Styrofoam use, as Styrofoam is problematic because it is very expensive to transport.
- Stan Mills welcomed any additional public comment
 - Dee Durham, public attendee, spoke about a November voluntary awareness campaign she is promoting called “No Straw November”. The campaign is aimed at limiting straw use in restaurants. Grain restaurant in Newark, DE is a current supporter.

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Discuss Future Agenda Content

None

Next Meeting

- Next meeting to be held November, 15th 2017 in Lewes, DE
 - Major topic: Organics, DSM Report
- December meeting cancelled.

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 2.15pm.
- All attendees invited on a guided tour of the MRF.